National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges

Extension Committee on Organization and Policy

Leadership Advisory Council 2006 Report

Glen D. Whipple, Chair

Out of clutter, find simplicity.
Out of discord, find harmony.
In the middle of difficulty, lies opportunity
Albert Einstein
The World is Flat, p. 339

The fourth meeting of the Leadership Advisory Council (LAC) was chaired by Glen D. Whipple, ECOP Chair elect and was held May 22-24, 2006, in Denver, Colorado. The meeting was facilitated by Rhonda Shipp, University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service. Using the Mobius strip facilitation method, the agenda was divided into three parts of "What?", "So What?", and "Now What?"

The 2006 LAC focus was the future and how the Cooperative Extension System (CES) can thrive in the 21st Century world. Prior to arriving, all Council members read *The World is Flat* by Thomas L. Freidman, and were encouraged to discuss it with the groups they represent through their seat at the LAC. The agenda was built around the ideas expressed in the book.

The LAC Charge

As stated in the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy Strategic Framework, November 2003, the LAC vision is to provide challenging input and ideas on current relevant issues and progressive suggestions and ideas based on scientific data about future issues for the System.

The LAC Meeting - What?

In this section of the meeting, the agenda focused on gaining a mutual understanding of the ten flatteners presented in *The World is Flat* and how they relate to Cooperative Extension. Some comments included:

- The fall of the Berlin wall changed the nature of the competitive relationships in the world. Some campus silos need to fall as well.
- The first choice for information is the web. How is CES measuring up in providing convenience in getting information?
- Standardization of software that allow computers to talk to each other has provided for common data sets, more accommodation for a variety of relationships and new ways of working together, like eXtension's Communities of Practice.
- Off shoring is changing the type of questions that CES is getting, i.e. don't tell us how to grow it; tell us how to sell it. How does CES reach out and interface with communities that have lost jobs in textiles, auto industry, etc?
- Is there a way that CES can look at the supply chain practices used by corporate America, particularly Walmart, which can result in greater efficiency?
- How can CES exploit their comparative advantage like UPS has done through insourcing?
- Is CES in-forming to increase the knowledge base of clientele? Has CES learned to work as an information filter?
- Everything in today's world is moving faster but what is the result of it – good and bad?

Brian Dabson, Associate Director, Rural Policy Research Institute, presented the three themes from *The World is Flat*, each of which depend on the digitization factor, and discussed what they may mean for Cooperative Extension. He stressed the need for:

- Basic global understanding and experiences in today's world;
- High level of skill development that includes creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship; and
- Personal adaptability skills like critical thinking, problem solving and communication skills.

Dabson recommended that one critical 21st century skill for CES is a shift from being the fountain of all information to that of being a facilitator, bringing knowledge into a community as an instrument of change looking at assets and showing an entrepreneurial spirit. He asserted that a national level focus will not work today; survivors will be nimble and quick to adopt and change at the community and regional level.

The LAC Meeting – So What?

Considerable time was spent in discussion of the question, "What does all this mean as CES positions itself for the future?" To get to the answer, Friedman's three themes were used by work groups to look at the future. Friedman's themes are:

- "Triple convergence" (new playing field, new plays, and new players);
- "Three Dirty Little Secrets" (numbers gap, ambition gap, and education gap);
- The "Untouchables" (specialized workers, adaptable workers, and anchored workers).

Some comments that were received from this discussion included:

- It either means a great opportunity or our demise. It hinges on whether we can focus on an overall common purpose that is valued, whether we can function as an organized system, and whether we can implement in adaptable and effective ways. Key – rebuild the connections and value within our universities and local efforts.
- We must be willing to change and adapt in order to meet the demands of the new flattened world or we will no longer be relevant.
- We must become more flexible (employees, facilitators) and allow others to be a part of our circle. We must remember that the future of the organization is dependent upon our ability to help others and not about protecting our traditions.

Evan Vlachos, Professor, Sociology and Civil Engineering, Colorado State University, presented "The Effects of Global Forces on Rural Communities: The Role and Challenges of Cooperative Extension." After providing historical and demographic information, Vlachos presented the new 3 R's:

- Rethinking – new paradigms
- Reorganizing – organizational mobilization
- Retooling – new skills and resources

He also presented some emerging operational principles for consideration:

- Envisioning – sharing the dream, sharing the goal
- Empowerment – joint decision making, power sharing
- Enactment – implementation, civic engagement

Difficulties abound because of the inertias of habit, history, and equilibrium. He concluded by stating that the future of CES will be its ability to provide leadership.

The LAC Meeting – Now What?

The LAC membership continued to work through a facilitated process to arrive at the following five recommendations to the ECOP:

1. ECOP will initiate a discussion to identify our core business.

2. ECOP will continue and strengthen collaboration in local communities by encouraging and supporting training in building collaboration, process skills, problem solving, and group facilitation for every Extension educator.

3. ECOP will provide a platform to develop models for recognition and reward of Extension professionals in Communities of Practice so that the best research and knowledge base information is available to the communities of interest without duplication.

4. ECOP will identify barriers, limitations and restrictions to operational flexibility by appointing a task force that may use a consultant. ECOP will support the customization of scientific knowledge to address local and relevant issues.

5. ECOP will determine short/long term impacts of Extension programs.

Closing Remarks

Colien Hefferan, Administrator, USDA/CSREES, congratulated the LAC on a successful meeting and made the following points:

- Never thought of Extension as an information based program; Extension is about sorting and adding value through the core mission of taking the ever evolving base of information that helps citizens solve problems and applying it.
- Extension's comparative advantage is the interpretation of knowledge.
- eXtension is a transformational tool and will be used most by Extension staff.
- Extension has tremendous opportunity in the area of disaster resilient communities. Extension is there when communities are stable and are there when a disaster occurs. The Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) is serving us well.
- While operational efficiency is important, Extension should think from an issue based perspective to outline a roadmap for the future of Extension.
- Extension needs to help universities understand the uniqueness of their relationship to communities through Extension.

Larry Cote, ECOP Chair, made the following points:

- Extension and CSREES have worked on the changing funding portfolio of CES and the documents, "Managing a Changing Portfolio" can be found at **http://www.csrees.usda.gov/qlinks/pdfs/portfolio_report.pdf**
- The work of the LAC is important and is incorporated into the ECOP Goals and has been since the first LAC meeting. ECOP will discuss and circulate your work.
- All here are leaders in some capacity and you are encouraged to act.
- Some of the essential elements of CES that provide comparative advantage are:
 - Community infrastructure;
 - Program is king and queen for Extension and drives every decision;
 - Extension is part of a university; Extension should strive to be absolutely essential to our universities achieving its mission.
 - Extension should develop a set of priorities and issues that talks about what we are.

Cote concluded by reviewing some of the actions being taken through the goals established when he chaired the LAC meeting in 2005.

Whipple, LAC Chair, ended by thanking all involved and made the following comments on the top five recommendations:

1. ECOP will look at the "core business."
2. I am surprised about the focus on community development. ECOP will work to make this a very attractive effort.
3. eXtension is the single best thing we are doing to move us into the future.
4. ECOP will look at ways to more effectively communicate.
5. The Measuring Excellence in Extension Task Force is moving us toward new ways of looking at impact. ECOP will know more in July when their work is presented.

The LAC concluded with a video segment from Stephen Covey's book *The Eighth Habit* titled "Leaving a Legacy."

On behalf of the 2006 Leadership Advisory Council, I am pleased to submit this report to the ECOP for review and follow-up. With the effective facilitation of Rhonda Shipp, the LAC fulfilled its vision. The recommendations provided will be useful to the ECOP and the leadership team as it plans for the future in a "flat" world.

Thanks to each member and the contributions they made for the effort to be a success.



Glen D. Whipple
Chair, Leadership Advisory Council and ECOP
Chair-elect

Extension Committee on Organization and Policy
Leadership Advisory Council

May 22-24, 2006

Hyatt Regency Denver at Colorado Convention Center
Denver, CO

2006 Leadership Advisory Council Members

Glen D. Whipple, *Chair (Western Region)*
Director, Cooperative Extension Service
University of Wyoming

Larry W. Turner, *Chair Elect*
(Southern Region)
Associate Dean for Extension and Director,
CES, University of Kentucky

JCEP Representatives (Association Past President)
Marilyn Y. Gore
Past President, NEAFCS

Jim Hovland, JCEP President
Past-President, ESP

Glenn Rogers
Past President, NACAA

Mary S. Williams *
Past President, NAE4-HA

Janean Creighton
Past President, ANREP

Program Leadership (Six areas, rotated)
Agriculture
Jennifer Williams
Director, ANR
West Virginia University Extension Service

Natural Resources
Nelson Daniels
Interim Program Leader AGNR
Prairie View A&M University

4-H
Pat McNally
Assistant Director and State Program Leader
4-H Youth Development
Kansas State University

Family and Consumer Sciences
Judith L. Warren
Associate Director, Human Sciences
Texas A&M University

Community Development
John E. Burton
Assistant Director, Cooperative Extension
University of Nevada, Reno

Information Technology/Communication
Terry Canup
Associate Dean and Associate Director
New Mexico State University

USDA-CSREES Program Personnel (two-year terms)
Natural Resource & Environment
Michael Bowers
National Program Leader – Ecology
USDA/CSREES

Plant and Animal Systems
Bradley K. Rein
Program Leader
USDA/CSREES/PAS

Economic and Community Systems
Henry Bahn
Director
USDA/CSREES

Families, 4-H, and Nutrition
Cathann A. Kress
Director, Youth Development
USDA/CSREES/F4HN

Competitive Programs
Chavonda Jacobs-Young *
National Program Leader
USDA/CSREES/NRI

Cooperative Extension System (two-year terms)
1890 Region
Carol Ann Johnson
Interim Assoc Dean For Extension
Fort Valley State University

Southern
Millie Ferrer
Interim Associate Dean for Extension
University of Florida/IFAS

Western
Deborah J. Young
Associate Director
Arizona Cooperative Extension

North Central
Patrick Cudney
Regional Director
Michigan State University

Northeast
Douglas O. Lantagne*
Interim Extension Director
University of Vermont

Ex-officio
Colien Hefferan
Administrator
USDA/CSREES

Lawrence S. Cote, ECOP Chair
Associate Provost, Extension and Public Service and Director, CES, West Virginia University

NASULGC Staff
James C. Wade
Director, Extension and Outreach

Linda Kay Benning
Associate Director, Extension and Outreach

* Did not attend.

List of Guests

Rhonda Shipp *(Facilitator)*
Senior University Extension Educator
University of Wyoming

Brian Dabson *(Guest Speaker)*
Associate Director
Rural Policy Research Institute
Research Professor, Truman School of Public Affairs
University of Missouri-Columbia

Evan Vlachos *(Guest Speaker)*
Sociology and Civil Engineering
Colorado State University

Clyde F. Jackson *(Substituting for Mary Williams)*
NAE4-HA President Elect
Virginia Tech

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